



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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KENTUCKY JOINS CAREER READINESS INITIATIVE

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Today, Kentucky took another step forward in its efforts to raise the rigor and relevance of career and technical education to better prepare high school graduates for postsecondary success.

Kentucky is among a group of 17 states that committed to develop and execute a detailed plan to implement recommendations made in [Opportunities and Options: Making Career Preparation Work for Students](#), a report by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Career Readiness Task Force, led by then Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. CCSSO launched the task force last year to address concerns that career education is often perceived as an outdated model that tolerates low expectations and is misaligned with the evolving needs of the current labor market.

For the past several years, Kentucky has been working to ensure rigor in career and technical education classes, make learning relevant and aligned with regional job market demands, and expand career pathway options for students so they will be prepared for high-skilled, high-demand jobs.

The report encourages states to make high school programs more responsive to the labor market by enlisting employers as a lead partner.

“K-12 education must partner with business and industry in order to make career readiness a priority for students and communities,” said Laura Arnold, acting associate commissioner for the Office of Career and Technical Education at the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). “As KDE moves forward with this initiative, I look forward to identifying additional resources and best practices that may positively impact career and technical education in Kentucky.”

Using economic development data and partnerships with community employers, Kentucky will design more rigorous career readiness pathways that span secondary and postsecondary levels culminating in credentials for students.

Other recommendations in the task force report include raising the quality of career pathways in secondary schools and expanding accountability systems to emphasize career readiness.

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“The task force recommendations were an important start, but states now must make them a reality,” said Chris Minnich, executive director of CCSSO. “In this global economy, we must prepare all kids to have an option in a career pathway as well as continued academic pursuits by the time they graduate from high school.”

Through the Career Readiness Initiative, CCSSO will develop an online resource center to provide strategies, case studies, self-assessment tools, communication materials and models of best practice.

In addition to Kentucky, other states involved in the Career Readiness Initiative include California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

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The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the United States, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks membership consensus on major educational issues and expresses its views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

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